



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR NEWSLETTER

A Happy New Year to all our members of the u3a from both myself and members of the Committee. We have seen and are very pleased to have experienced, an increase in membership over the past two years, with our end-of-year number of members in 2022 being 216, and in 2023, the number being 229. We are hoping that the growth in membership numbers will continue in 2024.

We have seen the positive changes that arise from an increase in members, with an increase in the number of Groups, and in addition the positive effects and new ideas that emerge in many of our Groups.

However, an increase in membership also results in challenges, with, for example, the need to review the accommodation we need to provide for the increases.

I am pleased to say that the Members Meetings on the First and Third Thursdays of each month will recommence in January with a talk on **January 4th by Chris Marsden on the subject of 'The History and Future of Broadcasting. On January 18th, there will be a talk by Paul Barwick on Nancy Wake.** She was known as 'The White Mouse', and this is a talk about a British woman, who was a spy for the Allies in WW2.

It is good to report that for many of our dates in 2024, in respect of our schedule of Members' Meetings, bookings have already been arranged with a varied range of topics. I will aim to provide a fairly complete list of the topics of the talks in the next Newsletter.

My best wishes

Roger Thompson

PS - See the end of this Newsletter for a list of 2024 Members' and Speaker Meetings

MEMBERS' NEWS

We are very sorry to hear that Norma Windle has recently been diagnosed with painful shingles. Get well soon Norma and hopefully, we'll soon see you back attending meetings.

We were also very sorry to receive the news at the beginning of last month that John Sander had died. John has been a member for several years and he and his wife, Ann were regular attendees at our Thursday afternoon meetings. We send our love and condolences to Ann and their family.

U3a ONLINE EVENTS

Click here to see what's on! - [Link to u3a online events](#)

You'll be surprised at what you may find!

NEW GROUPS - COULD THIS BE YOU?



There is a growing interest in forming a **German Conversation** group.

If you did German at school, would you like to speak it again? Would you like to share your thoughts in a different language? Do you want to extend your interest in other languages?

To add your name to the list of group members contact **Brian Ball** on ballbrian193@gmail.com.



There is, also, a growing interest in forming a second **Creative Writing** group. If you've always had an urge to write short stories, poems or even a novel, this group is ideal for you.

To add your name to the list of group members contact **Brian Ball** on ballbrian193@gmail.com.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Many thanks to all the group leaders who have supplied copy for this Newsletter.

For more information about Harpenden u3a Groups and Group Leaders click [here](#)

THE SPANISH GROUP



¡Hola compañeros!

Our Spanish group is fun, lively and informative. We meet fortnightly to practise our spoken Spanish, learn some new expressions and discuss various topics on a wide variety of themes. But WE ARE FULL and sadly can't offer places to others who have expressed interest. Can anyone offer to start a second group? – it would be wonderful if someone would step forward. I am happy to offer more info - just give me, **Rosemary, a ring on 07443 425826** or email defenton@hotmail.com .

¡Hasta luego!

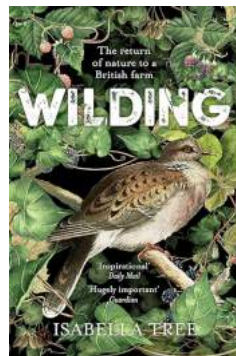
READING GROUP 1



Reading Group 1 recently met to discuss “Mrs England” by Stacey Halls. It is set in 1903, and the central character is a young Norland-trained nanny. She goes to live in an isolated family home in Yorkshire, and gradually comes to discover all is not well in the household. The book is very well constructed, and all of us enjoyed it – which is unusual!

Best wishes for the New Year from **Jean**

READING GROUP 2



Every member of the group is allocated a month and is then requested to nominate a book for that meeting. The member who chooses a book leads the discussion. It has been a very successful way of working and ensures wide-ranging selection. At the end of the year we all nominated our “best of the year” – this was ‘Wilding’ by Isabella Tree. A non-fiction book which captured the imagination of our readers.

After the December meeting we all sat down to a convivial and enjoyable Christmas Lunch at The Engineer. It was so good that we forgot to take a photograph!

At the time of writing we are reading ‘The Heart’s Invisible Furies’ by John Boyne. A challenging and engaging book. February will be ‘Educated’ by Tara Westover and in March it will be ‘All Quiet on the Western Front’ by Erich Maria Remarque selected by group member and Harpenden u3a chairman Roger Thompson. An eclectic selection.

I have been very pleasantly surprised at the success of this enjoyable group which has been running for just over a year. Friendships have been formed and we have learned a great deal. Thank you to all the members who have entered into the true spirit of u3a.



Some of the Book Group members pictured at the December meeting before moving on to Christmas Lunch at The Engineer.

Steve Gledhill Group Leader (07785 381912)



THE HISTORY GROUP

The History Group continues to meet on the second Tuesday of each month. The meetings as usual take place in the Randall Room of the Harpenden Trust Hall.

The Group has had a range of topics each month, and a programme of presentations has been arranged for 2004.

Outlined below are the presentations for 2024 and the name of speakers:

January 11th 'The Legacy of the 18th Century', Derek Morris'

February 13th 'In the Shadow of the Workhouse' Terry Turner'

March 11th 'The Crimean War', Malcolm Rainbow

April 9th 'The Spanish Civil War', Steve French.

May 4th 'Karl Marx: Brilliant Historian; Lousy Philosopher', Eric Midwinter.

June 11th 'Modern China', Mick Nolan

July 9th, 'The Miners Strike, 40 years on' Roger Thompson.

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History Group members are advised about each meeting, but an invitation is extended to other members also, if they wish to attend.

At all meetings, there is a £1 levy on all attendees to cover the cost of the room hire.

Roger Thompson Group Leader (01582 620811)

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

In the last few months, the Art Appreciation group has been looking at the lives and the work of painters in Victorian times. Inevitably, we have seen reflections of seriously hard work, desperate poverty and hardship. It is very clear that the artists set out to show up the terrible conditions in which many people lived and worked. And, it did not go unnoticed.

These paintings spoke to the viewers. No text was necessary. "The Stonebreaker" is worked to a standstill and is probably dead. "Found Drowned", is of a young woman brought, drowned, out of the river. Why might a young woman be drowned? No Money, no family, no food, forced into prostitution and eventually diseased. Unwanted.

Political and social commentators such as Beatrice and Sidney Webb, who founded the Fabian Society, drew astute observations of the unfairness and exploitation which they had seen.

Eventually, in 1900 the Labour Party was formed and society began to change for the better.

The Group meets monthly. I send out an overview of the artist 's life and times, which the group will read and they then do any additional research. We view the paintings on tv from a member's lap top and then we discuss the paintings as we view them.

Informative, stimulating, enlightening..... That's Art.

Pat Jacques Group Leader

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CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP

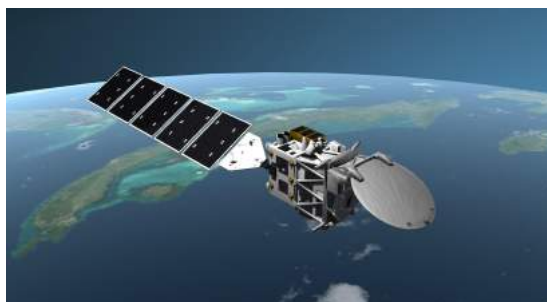


If you have an interest in current affairs, please feel free to join us.

Our next meeting is on the **16th January** (as usual the 3rd Tuesday of the month) in the Randall Room at the Harpenden Trust Hall in Southdown. Doors open at 2.15 pm for setting up. We start the meeting at 2.30 and end at 4.00.

Further info from Mick Nolan at micknolangalway@btinternet.com.

SCIENCE AND TECH GROUP



Science and Tech Group did not meet in December, but many of us enjoyed the Christmas Party.

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday January 17th**, when David Evans will be asking "Can Science & Technology provide future food security?"

David Collins Group Leader

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Thank you from Viv Chandler



At the AGM last October, I was presented with an envelope by Roger as an appreciation for my three years as Chairman. I was delighted to find that the envelope contained a voucher towards afternoon tea at Luton Hoo.

Ced and I treated ourselves in the period between Christmas and New Year when Luton Hoo looked wonderful all bedecked with its Christmas decorations. We spent a lovely, elegant afternoon there which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Thank you Harpenden u3a

Viv x



FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION

List of Members' and Speaker Meetings 2024

Please find below, for ease of reference, a list of meetings as at 4/1/24. This list will be updated in future Newsletters. Stay tuned!

All meetings start at 2.15 p.m

4th January Members' Talk - Chris Marsden *'The History and Future of Journalism'*

18th January Speaker Meeting - Paul Barwick *'The White Mouse- Nancy Wake'*

1st February Members' Talk - Tony Owen *'A Journey through Cambodia and Laos'*

15th February Speaker Meeting- Murray Craig *'Sheep over the Bridge - City of London'*

7th March Members' Talk Barbara Cordina *'3 years as u3a East of England Trustee'*

21st March Speaker Meeting Zoe Jasko *'What the Wind Saw'*

4th April Members' Talk - *tbc*

18th April Speaker Meeting Anne Luder *'The Plants of the Passover Plate'*

2nd May Members Talk Phil Marsh *'Israel and Palestine'*

16th May Speaker Meeting Graham and Bronwen *'The Fabulous Fifties'*

6th June Members' Talk - *tbc*

20th June Speaker Meeting Mike Barbakoff *'The First Enigma Codebreakers'*.

4th July Members' Talk - *tbc*

18th July Speaker Meeting Mark Lewis *'The World of Art Deco'*

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List of Members' and Speaker Meetings 2024 (Continued)

10th August Members' Talk - *tbc*

15th August Summer Party - Plough and Harrow

5th September Members' Talk - *tbc*

19th September Speaker Meeting - *tbc*

3rd October Members' Talk - *tbc*

17th October AGM Guest Speaker - Colin Oakes

7th November Members' Talk - *tbc*

21st November - Speaker Meeting - - *tbc*

5th December Members' Talk - *tbc*

19 December Christmas Party

That's all for now folks!

